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## **The Museum's Buildings and Collection**

Since its founding in 1893, the Denver Art Museum has amassed more than 68,000 works of art, one of the largest and most comprehensive collections of world art between Chicago and the West Coast. Internationally known for its holdings of American Indian art, the Museum has also assembled an extensive group of pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial art objects now considered one of the finest collections anywhere. Other areas of concentration are European and American painting and sculpture, architecture, design and graphics, modern and contemporary, Asian, African, Oceanic, western American and textile art.

In 1971, the Museum opened the remarkable 24-sided, two-tower North Building by architect Gio Ponti in collaboration with James Sudler Associates of Denver. Over one million faceted, shimmering gray tiles, developed by Dow Corning, provide cladding for the radical structure. The Denver Art Museum remains the only building in the United States completed by this important Italian master of modern design.

This bold tradition continued with the Frederic C. Hamilton Building, situated directly south of the North Building, designed by architect Daniel Libeskind. With its opening in October 2006, the Denver Art Museum gained 146,000 square feet, nearly doubling its former size. The complex features substantially more gallery space for the presentation of its collections and special exhibitions. Libeskind's dramatic design, referential to the Ponti building, reflects not only the mountain peaks that provide a powerful backdrop for this spirited city, but the intricate and geometric rock crystals found in the foothills of the Rockies.

Important works of art in their own right, the buildings by Ponti and Libeskind provide dynamic ways to experience the Museum's extensive and diverse collection, which reflects the region and provides innovative ways for the community to experience cultures from around the world. At the heart of the Denver Art Museum is the visitor experience—how one sees and engages with its buildings and its collections, and participates in the Museum's pioneering educational initiatives.

**The collections of the Denver Art Museum are arranged as follows:**

## **THE HAMILTON BUILDING**

The 146,000-square-foot expansion of the Denver Art Museum consists of five levels (including art storage on the lower level). Sited on city-owned property south of 13th Avenue, the Hamilton Building, which connects to the North Building via an enclosed bridge across 13th Avenue, houses:

### **Lower Level**

#### ***Public Space***

The lower level of the Hamilton Building houses the 278-seat Sharp Auditorium, art storage, conservation facilities, and meeting space. The auditorium lobby features works by Bauhaus master Herbert Bayer, whose archive is part of the Denver Art Museum collection.

### **First Level**

#### ***Temporary Exhibitions***

Approximately 6,000 square feet of temporary exhibition space is located on the first level. The space is designed to connect with additional exhibition space on the second level. The first level also contains guest services, including a welcome center, and atrium.

### **Second Level**

#### ***Western American Art***

In addition to art from the William Sr. and Dorothy Harmsen Collection, visitors also can view modern and contemporary works capturing the spirit of the American West. This exhibition highlights the museum's Contemporary Realism Collection and reminds visitors that the West and its people remain a viable subject for artistic expression.

#### ***Temporary Exhibitions***

Approximately 14,000 square feet on the second level is dedicated to temporary exhibitions and is designed to connect with exhibition space on the first level.

### **Third Level**

#### ***Modern and Contemporary Art***

The modern and contemporary art department continues its very active program of exhibitions. The collection features internationally prominent artists as well as emerging talents, including many who live and work in the western United States. In 2008, a new works on paper gallery was added to the third level, with regularly rotating exhibitions. A reinstatement of the modern and contemporary galleries, titled *Focus: The Figure*, was completed in late 2008 with more than 100 new works on view. By concentrating on a single theme from the collection, the reinstatement reveals the depth and variety of the DAM's holdings. Modern highlights include paintings, drawings and sculpture by Modigliani, Appel, Soutine, Klee, Archipenko, Picasso and Matisse.

#### ***Oceanic Art***

Consisting of more than 1,200 objects produced by the cultures of Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Australia, the Oceanic collection includes works collected in the field by explorers such as Captain James Cook in the late 18th- and early 19th-centuries. A gift of New Guinea art established the Denver Art Museum as one of the most important repositories of Melanesian art in the country.

### **Fourth Level**

#### ***Modern & Contemporary Art (continued)***

Works by Adrian Piper, John DeAndrea, Mona Hatoum, Larry Clark, Jonas Burgert, Richard Serra, Luis Jiménez, Tony Ortega, Bill Amundson, Bjørn Melhus and many others are among

the wide representation of local, regional, national and international artists on view. A recently opened new media gallery on the fourth level, Fuse Box, showcases the talent of young, up-and-coming artists and rotates regularly. The department of modern and contemporary art also includes impressive holdings of Colorado artists, as well as the Herbert Bayer Collection and Archive. Works by this former Bauhaus artist, who called Aspen his home for 28 years, are installed on the lower level of the Hamilton Building.

### ***African Art***

The African art collection is broadly representative of most artistic forms found south of the Sahara including textiles, bark cloth, stone and wood sculpture, beadwork, ceramics, metalwork and musical instruments. Greatest strengths of the collection are from the region of West Africa with special concentration in the arts of the Yoruba. Historic work is juxtaposed with contemporary African work in the gallery.

## **THE NORTH BUILDING**

The original seven-story building houses:

### **First Level**

Serving as public space, including the Museum's primary event area and the fine dining restaurant Palettes, the first level features several family-oriented activities, which continue on the lower level. The first level also features a large temporary exhibition space.

### **Second Level**

#### ***American Indian Art***

The internationally acclaimed North American Indian collection, the largest group of works in the Denver Art Museum, includes more than 19,000 art objects representing the heritage of all cultures and tribes across the United States and Canada. Recognized as one of the best of its kind in the United States, the collection spans more than 2,000 years of artistic creativity, from prehistoric times to the present. The American Indian Northwest Coast collection galleries connect to the new building via an enclosed bridge across 13th Avenue.

#### ***Architecture, Design and Graphics***

Numbering more than 4,000 works, the museum's diverse architecture, design, and graphics collection encompasses a broad range of design practices, including architecture, decorative design, graphic design, industrial design, and functional craft.

The museum is also the steward of the AIGA Design Archives, a major acquisition received by the museum in 2006 representing the most comprehensive holding of American graphic design from 1980 to the present in the world. This collection of more than 6,000 objects is augmented annually with a gift of about 300 award-winning items from the year's AIGA design competitions.

### **Third Level**

#### ***American Indian Art (continued)***

The collection includes diverse artistic traditions such as Pueblo ceramics, Navajo textiles, Northwest Coast sculpture, basketry, Plains beadwork, and oil paintings, representing the full range of American Indian art styles. Over the past 80 years, these artworks have been featured both nationally and internationally in scholarly publications, innovative exhibitions, and educational programs.

### **Fourth Level**

#### ***New World (Pre-Columbian and Spanish Colonial Art)***

From South America to the American Southwest, the Museum's New World collection encompasses the ancient Latin American world and Spain's historical "New World" empire. The encyclopedic pre-Columbian collection contains artifacts from virtually all geographic areas with the ancient arts of Costa Rica as the collection's crowning jewel. Colonial Latin

America is represented by the most comprehensive collection in this country and includes paintings, silver, furniture and decorative arts from the 16th through the 19th centuries. For the convenience of our visitors, bilingual (English/Spanish) reference guides are available throughout the galleries.

### **Fifth Level**

#### ***Asian Art***

Reflecting the rich diversity and wide-ranging artistic expression of a complex and expansive area of the world, Asian art from the Museum's collection is displayed geographically and thematically. Outstanding ceramics, furniture, metalwork, painting and sculpture from the Near and Middle East, India, Tibet, Nepal, China, Japan and Korea are on view. Exemplary items of material culture, such as samurai armor, Indonesian puppets and Chinese court robes, are on view and used in innovative educational programs that focus on Asian civilization.

### **Sixth Level**

#### ***European and American Painting***

More than 2,000 paintings, sculptures and works on paper, with notable concentrations in early Italian Renaissance and 19th-century French painting, comprise the American and European collections. Highlights of European art include distinguished works by Carlo Crivelli, Paolo Veronese, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, Camille Pissarro and Toulouse-Lautrec. The American art holdings include works by Winslow Homer and Robert Henri, and significant sculptures by Thomas Crawford, Hiram Powers and Herbert Haseltine.

Visitors to this floor also may view selections from The Berger Collection, a selection of paintings, drawings and art objects that present a history of the British School of art tradition from its origins among anonymous Norman artist to the achievements of painters working in the 21st century. Comprised of approximately 200 objects, a selection of the Berger Collection is on view on a rotating basis. The collection is owned by the Berger Collection Educational Trust and is housed at the DAM.

#### ***Textile Art***

From Coptic and pre-Columbian textiles to contemporary works of art in fiber, the Museum's textile collection now numbers over 5,700 objects. A nationally recognized collection of American quilts and coverlets, the Julia Wolf Glasser collection of samplers and the Charlotte Hill Grant Collection of Chinese Court Costumes are particularly remarkable. The current Neusteter Textile Gallery show, *New and Noteworthy: The Hopkins Family Quilt in Context*, features a recent acquisition—an album quilt made by Elizabeth Hopkins in the 1840s that illustrates various aspects of the maker's life and her maritime community of Port Jefferson, N.Y. Nine other pre-Civil War quilts from the permanent collection present styles, themes and techniques of the period.

### **Seventh Level**

#### ***Western American Art***

This collection presents historical Western art, featuring approximately 135 paintings and sculptures, most of which were produced before 1950. Drawing from the DAM's permanent collection, including works from the William Sr. and Dorothy Harmsen Collection and private collections from across the nation, the new installation presents an array of masterworks that reflect the social, aesthetic and cultural attitudes of the time.

Also on the seventh level is the Berger Western Discovery Library. The space contains cozy reading areas and drawers with prints, watercolors and photos for further investigation and a hands-on display of vintage cameras with an opportunity to share photos. Kids can recreate iconic Western personas with costumes based on figures in the nearby artworks.

### ***Photography***

Established in 2008, the Museum's photography department brings important works collected since 1937 under a single curatorial roof. This collection currently is not on view, but plans are underway to install work in this area in the near future. Collection holdings encompass more than 7,000 works, including the renowned Wolf Collection of 19th-century American landscape photography and extensive holdings of Native American portraits by Edward Curtis, Alexander Gardner and David Francis Barry. The 20th century collection includes important works by prominent artists such as Herbert Bayer, Diane Arbus, Robert Adams and by a distinguished group of Czech avant-garde photographers. Contemporary artists include Lucas Samaras, Bernd and Hilla Becher, and David Levinthal. The department seeks to develop holdings of work by emerging talents as well as established photographers and artists who live and work in the western United States.

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